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in·ter·face  **Pronunciation Key** (ĩn'tər-fās')

n.

1. A surface forming a common boundary between adjacent regions, bodies, substances, or phases.
2. A point at which independent systems or diverse groups interact: "the interface between crime and politics where much of our reality is to be found" (Jack Kroll).
3. Computer Science.
 - a. The point of interaction or communication between a computer and any other entity, such as a printer or human operator.
 - b. The layout of an application's graphic or textual controls in conjunction with the way the application responds to user activity: *an interface whose icons were hard to remember.*

v. in·ter·faced, in·ter·fac·ing, in·ter·fac·es (ĩn'tər-fās')

v. tr.

1. To join by means of an interface.
2. To serve as an interface for.

v. *intr.*

1. To serve as an interface or become interfaced.
2. To interact or coordinate smoothly: "Theatergoers were lured out of their seats and interfaced with the scenery" (New York Times).

in'ter-fa'cial *adj.*

Usage Note: The noun *interface* has been around since the 1880s, meaning "a surface forming a common boundary, as between bodies or regions." But the word did not really take off until the 1960s, when it began to be used in the computer industry to designate the point of interaction between a computer and another system, such as a printer. The word was applied to other interactions as well—between departments in an organization, for example, or between fields of study. Shortly thereafter *interface* developed a use as a verb, but it never really caught on outside its niche in the computer world, where it still thrives. The Usage Panel has been unable to muster much enthusiasm for the verb. Thirty-seven percent of Panelists accept it when it designates the interaction between people in the sentence *The managing editor must interface with a variety of freelance editors and proofreaders*. But the percentage drops to 22 when the interaction is between a corporation and the public or between various communities in a city. Many Panelists complain that *interface* is pretentious and jargony. Certainly, it has no shortage of acceptable synonyms; *cooperate*, *deal*, *exchange information*, *interact*, and *work* present themselves as ready substitutes.

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Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*

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in·ter·face (in'tər-fās')

n.

A surface forming a common boundary between adjacent regions or bodies.

Source: *The American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary*

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Main Entry: **in·ter·face**

Pronunciation: 'int-&r-"fAs

Function: *noun*

: a surface forming a common boundary of two bodies, spaces, or phases <*interfaces* between various tissues such as skin, fatty tissue, and muscle —H. P. Schwan> —**interface** *transitive verb* -**faced**; -**fac·ing**

—**in·ter·fa·cial** /"int-&r-'fA-sh&l/ *adjective*

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary*, © 2002 Merriam-Webster, Inc.

interface

n 1: (chemistry) a surface forming a common boundary between two things (two objects or liquids or chemical phases) 2: (computer science) a program that controls a display for the user (usually on a computer monitor) and that allows the user to interact with the system [syn: user interface] 3: the overlap where two theories or phenomena affect each other or have links with each other; "the interface between chemistry and biology" 4: (computer science) computer circuit consisting of the hardware and associated circuitry that links one device with another (especially a computer and a hard disk drive or other peripherals) [syn: port]

Source: *WordNet* ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University

interface

<jargon> A boundary across which two systems communicate. An interface might be a hardware connector used to link to other devices, or it might be a convention used to allow communication between two software systems. Often there is some intermediate component between the two systems which connects their interfaces together. For example, two EIA-232 interfaces connected via a serial cable.

See also graphical user interface, Application Program Interface.

(1996-05-22)

Source: *The Free On-line Dictionary of Computing*, © 1993-2005 Denis Howe

interface

interface: in CancerWEB's On-line Medical Dictionary

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